



ICDF Networks

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Networks for Children and Youth



Photo: Dance Team from the New Life Church, South Africa.

As a rule before a class we always pray and ask the Lord to show us what we can teach our children. After teaching children’s worship classes for 33 years, I have come to realize that it’s not just about our ministry to children but their ministry to us! Children are dynamic instruments in the hands of God and if we step back and let them— they will rise up as mighty soldiers with amazing insights! They’re not afraid to speak what’s on their heart — and most times it turns out to be profound truths from the Word of God—even an answer to a question I had been seeking. It confirms to me over and over again how important it is to teach our children scripture. One never knows when the heart of God will be proclaimed through one of those little ones. So may I encourage you to step back, make room for and “listen” ... to the voice of God—through our children!

Blessings and love

Belma Vardy

A Church embracing the Dance as part of its Worship

The New Life Church in Witbank, South Africa has embraced dance as a regular part of their worship and we have invited Lorine Venter, the Dance Co-ordinator, to tell us more about their approach and understanding of the dance ministry in their church.



The art of dance is more than just the movement of bodies. It is the motion of people dancing their way to healing and deliverance. It is an opportunity for young and old to express their emotions as an extension of praise and worship.

I have been raised with dance. I had the privilege of being trained by one of the best (my mom), but also being allowed as a young girl to express myself through dance and choreography. Here I was, a young girl, watching older ladies dancing in their beautiful long skirts. That is where my love for worship through dance grew and exploded. It was a love language through which I could express myself freely to God when my words did not feel enough! I could express my deeper feelings of worship, adoration and agape love for my Lord and Saviour. The more I danced, the more free I became, and a deeper level of worship grew. A feeling I want every single young believer to feel. Some youth express it through song, some through painting and some through DANCE. Hence my drive to claim back the arts for God, and for His glory. It brings healing, restoration and allows a channel of expression for some who battle to express through words.

Sometimes I feel that there is a gap in our ministry, especially in dance. Our youth have the biggest influence on other young people out there, why are we not empowering them and equipping them in ministry? It may not be direct preaching, yet it is indirectly ministering. Preaching through dance. Testifying the word of God through movement.

Let us be forerunners and leaders and train them in the way of our Lord Jesus Christ, and when they are older, they will not depart from it. Ministry dance leaders instantly shift into a massive influential role in the lives of anyone involved by simply praying for them with consistency, determination and faithfulness. Scripture is truth, so we train them in scripture, and dance, choosing a dance style that they love, be it hip-hop, breakdancing, contemporary or classical ballet. They choose...but are guided and LED by the dance leaders! We make sure that the music choice and dance moves are always wholesome. There are some brilliant Christian artists out there providing music which is directed towards the youth yet carrying a strong message which is being imparted onto each youth dancer, over and over again, as they prepare their ministry item. God's message and love washes over them through music and dance, penetrating the heart and soul. Dancers are constantly reminded of their purpose, and that this is a form of witnessing and testifying the Gospel and the love of God.

A Church ... continued

Certain moves and styles need to be eliminated or limited. Directions of kicks, back bends and body expression needs to be continuously evaluated. Remembering we don't want to mislead the lost! We want to bring them into the Kingdom. Through dance ministry, we are reminding them that their lifestyle should bear fruit of the Holy Spirit and be a living testimony of God's goodness!

Here at New Life Church, Witbank, South Africa, we have been blessed with an amazing crew of young dancers who love the Lord with their whole being and love the art of dance. We are also extremely well supported and encouraged by our Pastor, Ryan Langkilde, who welcomes and encourages creativity in our church to enhance the message of the day - be it through dance, drama or art. If I may mention, Ryan himself had dance ministry in his youth.

We currently have 3 Groups training:

1. The Children's Dance Ministry Team
2. Elevate Youth Ministry Team
3. New Life Dance Campus Core Ministry Team

Children's Dance Ministry Team

The Children's Dance Ministry Team is for ages 7 to 12 years. It is an important phase as it establishes a discipline and aids in developing a technique for future dance ministry in their lives. On Friday afternoons, we currently practice and train for an hour in all forms of dance to widen their knowledge. We start off with prayer, leading to a warm-up session, and then training and input. We leave the last 5 minutes of each session for free dance. This is where we see our "junior choreographers" blossom.

It is our priority as leaders and mentors to pray with, and lay hands on, each individual before each session, aiming to develop a lifestyle of thankfulness, worship and praise. They learn to acknowledge that God is their healer and burden bearer, that they truly matter to Him. We teach them to pour out, so that the Holy Spirit can pour in, and they can then pour forth in ministry.

We encourage the young ones to praise and worship our Lord through dance. It teaches them that worship from the heart is first and foremost, and that dance is an extension of that. David danced with all his might before the Lord, (2 Samuel 6v14), and so should we.

It is beautiful to see how the children are encouraged to lift their hands with confidence in front of their peers during praise and worship at a Sunday service, as dance brings a form of confidence to their movements and to themselves. The children get to minister in front of their age groups, be it at schools or churches, and they often are asked to dance during the main Sunday service, enabling them to minister to people of all ages. **Let's raise up a generation that can openly and confidently display the gospel and the raw power of God through Worship, Praise and dance. Acts 2v17.**

Elevate Youth Dance Ministry

Here, the aim is to establish hearts for the ministry. This gets done from a place of prayer, prayer before ministry being the highest priority. This ministry is aimed for ages 13 to 18 years. Their preference of dance style is most



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definitely Hip-Hop. However, I have come to notice that as they grow and mature in their ministry, they tend to lean towards lyrical expressive dancing through which they can demonstrate social challenges which they face on a daily basis.

The dance team often gets approached to dance at youth services, as well as our main service, due to the diversity of dance styles. We often get given a specific song choice for a service in order for that item to support the specific message for that day. These items get choreographed and rehearsed over a period of 3 weeks. The team of dancers are so diligent, they can spend up to 16 hours rehearsing in order to obtain the level of excellence pleasing to God.



Over and above that, we meet every Friday evening, before Youth Ministry, for an hour of dance practice. In this session I have allocated leadership to a specific dancer. She has shown such commitment and dedication to dance ministry, as well as a love and passion for it, a pure gift and calling from God.

I believe we need to train and equip the youth to be able to run their ministry. I am always there at practice for if and when my guidance is required, and I tend to leave the choreography and song choices up to them. Showing

love trust and support and encouraging them to believe in their God given talent is crucial. If we try and box them in, we actually stifle their creativity. If we allow them their freedom to express themselves through dance choreography, they surprise you and come up with an item that will surpass your imagination. They take responsibility and ownership of the item. Witnessing this kind of growth in the Lord, and in their passion for ministry, is the most rewarding experience any dance ministry teacher could ever want or ask for. My heart is full. All glory to God.



NLDC Core Dance Ministry Team

This team consists of both youth and adults who volunteer for the New Life Church, Witbank, Dance Ministry. In order to be part of the core team one would have to have some knowledge of dance and audition prior to joining the team. We have rehearsals and training every Monday evening for one and a half hours, during which we serve and minister to each other, and then train for ministry or outreaches. Our aim is to spread the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ through the universal language of dance. Touching hearts, changing lives and dancing for our Loving Father.

My passion is to equip the Bride of Christ, to worship Jesus and to release the Kingdom of God through dance and creativity. Raising up a generation who is not ashamed to witness and testify of God's goodness. To stand boldly in front of their peers, unashamed, unhindered. Empowering and equipping the youth to go out, to go forth and be planet changers for our Lord Jesus Christ. His Love and joy over us is contagious, so go out and be contagious. God's presence creates an atmosphere of Love. Chains will be broken, lives will be healed, eyes will be opened, Christ is revealed!

Lorine Venter

A Family that Dance together Stays together

It was a fun filled day and a notable event as we engaged families in dance. ‘Dancers Day Out’ organized by the Praise Dance Academy in Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria has been an inspirational event since it started two years ago. This year’s event focused on the family and was promoted with the tag, “A family that dance together stays together”.

In the context of human society, a family is: “a group of people related either by consanguinity (ancestry) affinity or co-residence or some combination of these.” Families play a major role in the society and the community at large. The basic definition of dance is: “movement of the body to music”. How does family and dance connect? The thought/ idea started when a family consisting of the mother and three children (the Shosanya family) invited me to teach them a dance for a family video shoot. This took us like two weeks of constant rehearsals to arrange the steps. As a choreographer and also a scientist, I had some observations which also made me further the research on how dance as a form of physical activity connects the family. I discovered the joy expended when families dance together, I noted the fun and the interaction between members were deepened.

Dance poses a great aura in connecting the family and building team work without age disparity among family members. Dancing together is truly a unifying time for families to bond together, play, interact, have fun and overall increase family communication. When families dance together, they stay together. Dancing stimulates us physically and emotionally while there are also cognitive and social elements to it - you appear to get a much bigger release of endorphins when you dance than during other forms of exercises. It also connects us with the emotional centres in the brain.

Modern day living leaves us feeling disconnected from our families due to work, meeting daily needs, involvement in other activities, etc. Dancing together makes us feel better with our families. Another big draw to dancing is the social element. “It’s scientifically proved that dancing helps with social bonding,” explains Dr Lovath. “The synchrony involved in dancing to a beat along with other people is a powerful way for humans to connect.” Hence it improves human relation and intimacy among family members.

The event with close to 40 attendees started with an aerobics session and presentations from the summer dance class organized by the Praise Dance Academy and afterwards each family present were given instructors. There was a break out session for family dance rehearsals. It was fun seeing families rehearsing dance together, awarded and celebrated. The first position was given to the Bayode family, the second to the Victor family, and the third to the Babayemi family. It was really a great event and we bless God for the outcome. The planning committees were Agbo Favor, Tunde Oshin, Anthonia Adetolu, Onibudo Deborah, Oniya Bolu, Bayode Ayokunle, Progress Adetula, to mention a few. The event lasted for four hours. Surely dance has the right element to keep families together. When they dance together they are more connected together, they discover each other’s strengths and weaknesses, and also work as a team. Looking forward to making the concept of Family Dance a cultural phenomenon which many homes will adopt.



Abiodun Babalola

The Faith of a Child

Belma Vardy shared two precious testimonies with us that illustrates what it means to have faith like a child ...

Story #1:

I always invite the presence of the Holy Spirit into our dance classes. I had just finished teaching a class and Melany, one of my students, needed a ride home so I decided to invite her for supper. As I was preparing dinner I asked Melany to set the table for us. Melany set three places—two for us and one for the Holy Spirit.

When she got home and told her mother— that she set three places and that we had dinner with the Holy Spirit that night — her parents decided to do some research. To make a long story short—they both came to the Lord and to a place of hunger for wanting more of the Holy Spirit to be a part of their lives. They now too set an extra place at the table.

I realize the importance of teaching truths as our children are always watching and listening and one never knows where this will end up. BUT GOD.....

Story #2:

I was invited to a reservation in Saskatchewan to teach and bring the “River of Healing”.

Nine year old Brandon came to a jolted stop as he cried out, “Grandma! He’s real! He’s real! Jesus is real!”

The words came out of his mouth like lightning, piercing the very depths of our souls the truth of those words became embedded deep into our hearts and we felt a gripping hug as He cradled us in His arms wrapping Himself around every individual bathing us in the Light of His Glory and there was no doubt in our mind God You are here, God You are real

Through the mouths of babes



The Attention Seeking Child

Some months ago the ICDF Network for Dance for Children had a Facebook chat about a child in class who was always seeking attention. There were various strategies suggested and we are copying the reply from Roz Hancock here ...

My short answer to the attention seeker is to give them a special job. Sometimes that special job might be to give out props or musical instruments. Lots of positive attention. Also speak to the children at a whisper level so attention seekers don't see the need to raise their little voice. Also I say to kids: “Sorry, you need to not talk now ... Or we are not doing that now, you need to listen to Miss/Mr ... If they really won't comply then not only pray but have a private talk with parent/s where the child can't hear you and see if the parent has some idea as to why they are doing it. If it's still really tedious, ask if they can either take a few weeks break or explain to parent that the child is disturbing the whole class and it's not fair to everyone. (Sounds harsh but sometimes it's the only option.)

If you use them as a leader/ server they usually come good though.

(From the Facebook group: Dance For Children -International Christian Dance Fellowship)

To become part of the **ICDF Network for Dance for Children** contact Belma Vardy at ...
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The World of Hip Hop

One of the things I find fascinating is the way that cultures all over the world have dance at the centre of them. A dance style that I find particularly interesting is Hip Hop. You can trace the roots of hip hop back as far as the 1960's, where the Hispanic and African American communities in New York started combining moves for different dance styles to create a library of moves, that ever since has been synonymous with rap, scratch music and graffiti.

Unlike some genres of dance Hip Hop is actually made up of many different styles, each with its own moves and technique. In the 70's you had the the Old School styles such as Popping, Locking and Break Dancing. Since then many other styles have been added, as people have mixed old school styles in different cultures and individuals have put their unique twist on the moves. Hip Hop is a constantly evolving dance style so it is impossible to create an extensive list but here is a quick look at some of the most common:

Locking - is one of the oldest Hip Hop styles. It is based around the concept of freezing from a fast movement and "locking" into a position. With acrobatic moves and stylistic features, such as waving arms, pointing and rotating illusions with caps, this style is used as a foundation of many dance troops

Popping - is a more technically defined form of dance that involves isolating specific muscles to create a jerking affect in different parts of the body

Breaking - or Breakdancing can be broken into 4 main elements: Top Rock, Down Rock, Freeze and Power moves. Power moves and the freezes that go between them are what most people think of as break dancing as these are where you get all the head spins and hand stands

In these 3 styles you will find the foundation of most of the new school styles. As time has gone new skills have developed and these have then been expanded into styles of their own

Tutting - is the angular movement of arms often resembling Egyptian art which gave it the name from King Tut

House - intricate footwork and wave movements of the torso displaying different beats of the music

Robot - imitating a robot by isolating joints and freezing in positions

Lyrical - more down tempo style where adding emotion and musical interpretation is key. Often using the lyrics (hence Lyrical) for inspiration

Waving/Liquid - is creating waves and fluid motions with the body including the classic arm wave

Battle - Street dance battles are one of the most iconic forms of Hip Hop where you have a circle and two dancers 'fight' it out, with no contact, improvising with more and more complex combinations of impressive moves. And the list could go on...

Steven Turner

To join the **ICDF Network for Youth in Dance** contact Steven at ...
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